What is claimed is:

1. A method of processing search results obtained in response to a user query, the method comprising:

providing document pointers returned by a search engine to identify a source from which documents are available;

generating at least two visual abstracts for one of said documents, each of said visual abstracts being of a different size; and

formatting a stream of data such that when said data is displayed on a display screen regarding said one of said documents, a smaller one of said visual abstracts appears adjacent to a corresponding search result.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said visual abstract is generated by manipulating said document so as to enhance said visibility of at least a portion of said document while degrading visibility of at least another portion of said document.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said manipulating is performed by filtering said document.

1   4.   The method of claim 3, wherein said filtering is performed on an

2   image in said document.

1   5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying a larger one

2   of said visual abstracts on said display screen when requested by said user.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, further comprising storing data relating to

2   said larger one of said visual abstracts.

1   7.   The method of claim 5, wherein said larger one of said visual

2   abstracts is displayed on said display screen when a cursor is moved over said

3   smaller one of said visual abstracts.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, further comprising removing said larger

2   one of said visual abstracts from said display screen.

1   9.   The method of claim 8, wherein said larger one of said visual

2   abstracts is removed from said display screen when said cursor is moved away

3   from said smaller one of said visual abstracts.

10.   A method of processing search results obtained in response to a

user query, the method comprising:

examining document pointers returned by a search engine to

identify a source from which documents are available;

obtaining said documents from said source;

generating a visual abstract for each of said documents, each visual

abstract being formed by manipulating a corresponding source document so as to

enhance visibility of at least a first portion of said source document while

degrading visibility of at least a second portion of said source document; and

formatting a stream of data such that when said data is displayed

on a display screen, each visual abstract appears adjacent to a corresponding

search result.

11.   The method of claim 10, further comprising creating a larger visual

abstract of one of said documents.

12.   The method of claim 11, further comprising storing data relating to

said larger one of said visual abstracts.

13.   The method of claim 11, further comprising displaying said larger

one of said visual abstracts on said display screen on demand.

1   14.   The method of claim 13, wherein said larger one of said visual

2   abstracts is displayed on said display screen when a cursor is moved over said

3   smaller one of said visual abstracts.

1   15.   The method of claim 13, further comprising removing said larger

2   one of said visual abstracts from said display screen.

1   16.   The method of claim 15, wherein said larger one of said visual

2   abstracts is removed from said display screen when said cursor is moved away

3   from said smaller one of said visual abstracts.

1   17.   The method of claim 10, wherein said manipulating is performed

2   by filtering said source document.

1   18.   The method of claim 17, wherein said filtering is performed on an

2   image in said source document.

1   19.   The method of claim 10, wherein said first portion of said source

2   document corresponds to one of a title and a heading of said source document.

1   20.   The method of claim 19, wherein said one of said title and said

2   heading is enlarged as compared with said second portion of said source

3   document.

1   21.   The method of claim 10, wherein said second portion of said

2   source document corresponds to a body of text of said source document.

22.   A method of searching for a document, said method comprising:

2   supplying a search request;

3   providing abstracts of documents on a screen display that

4   correspond to said search request, said abstracts including a written summary and

5   a first visual abstract of each of said documents;

6   creating a second visual abstract of one of said documents, wherein

7   said second visual abstract is larger than said first visual abstract; and

8   displaying said second visual abstract when requested by a user.

1   23.   The method of claim 22, wherein said visual abstract is created by

2   manipulating a source document so as to enhance visibility of at least a first

3   portion of said source document.

1   24.   The method of claim 23, wherein said first portion corresponds to

2   one of a title and a heading of said document.

1   25.   The method of claim 22, wherein said second visual abstract is

2   displayed on said display screen when said user moves a pointing device over a

3   corresponding one of said first visual abstracts.

1   26.   The method of claim 25, further comprising removing said second

2   visual abstract from said display screen when said user moves said pointing

3   device away from said corresponding one of said first visual abstracts.

1   27.   The method of claim 22, further comprising storing data relating to

2   said second visual abstract in a cache database.

1   28.   The method of claim 27, further comprising deleting said data

2   relating to said second visual abstract in said cache database after a predetermined

3   amount of time.

     29.   A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly

2   embodying a program of instructions executable by said machine to perform

3   method steps for processing search results obtained in response to a user query,

4   said method comprising:

5   supplying a search request;

6   providing abstracts of documents on a screen display that

7   correspond to said search request, said abstracts including a written summary and

8   a first visual abstract of said documents;

9   creating a second visual abstract of one of said documents, wherein

10   said second visual abstract is larger than said first visual abstract; and

11   displaying said second visual abstract when requested by a user.

            30.   A computer system for searching for a document, said system

2   comprising:

3   a client system and a server system, said client system supplying a

4   search request to said server system, said server system providing abstracts of

5   documents to said client system, said abstracts corresponding to said search

6   request, said client system displaying said abstracts on a screen display, said

7   abstracts including a written abstract and a first visual abstract of each of said

8   documents, said server system creating a second visual abstract of one of said

9   documents, said second visual abstract being larger than said first visual abstract

10   when displayed on said screen display, said client system displaying said second

11   visual abstract when requested by a user.

31.   The system of claim 30, wherein said visual abstract is created by manipulating a source document so as to enhance visibility of at least a first portion of said source document.

32.   The system of claim 30, wherein said second visual abstract is displayed on said screen display when said user moves a pointing device over said first visual abstract.

33.   The system of claim 32, wherein said second visual abstract is removed from said screen display when said user moves said pointing device away from said first visual abstract of said document.